

Activities for March

- **Prepare beds for the spring** – remove weeds, fork over the soil and add some compost if you have any.
- Sow **broad beans** – they are big seeds that children will find easy to handle. Plant 5cm deep with 20-25cm between seeds.
- Start to plant out **potatoes** – in beds, big containers or compost bags/tyres. Make sure pots or bags have plenty of drainage holes.
- If the weather is warm, sow **carrots, beetroot & spring onions** in beds or containers. A covering of fleece will get them growing quicker.
- Sow **lettuce** seeds in pots or modules to plant out once they have 4-5 leaves – they will be more likely to survive slug attacks
- Sow **tomatoes and chillies** in pots and keep in a warm light place. Pot on into bigger pots when they have 2-4 leaves. Plant out late May (when there is no danger of frosts).



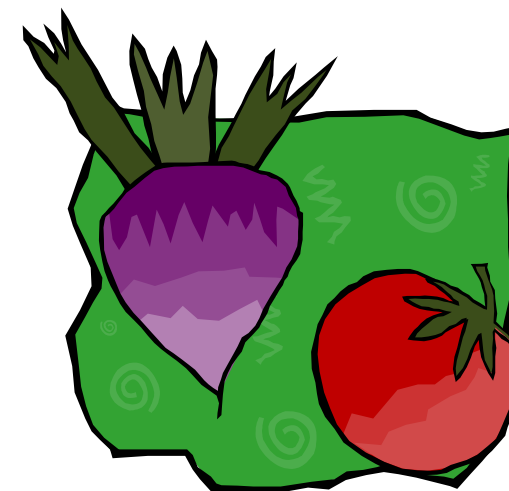
Activities for April

Lots of plants can be started off this month:

- Sow **runner** and **french beans** in pots to plant out in May.
- **Courgettes** are easy plants to grow – one plant produces lots of courgettes, so think about sowing 1 or 2 for your garden.
- Most children love **cucumber** and they are easy to grow outside in a sunny spot. Sow now inside and plant out in late May.
- You could also try sowing **sweetcorn** – you need to grow a few together so they can pollinate one another. Keep warm on a windowsill or mini-greenhouse.
- For easy flowers try **sunflowers**, **sweet peas**, **nasturtiums** and **marigolds**.
- Carry on sowing / planting **potatoes**, **tomatoes**, **carrots**, **beetroot** and **lettuce**.
- In the garden keep on top of **weeds** – they will be growing fast, keeping them down now will pay off later in the summer.

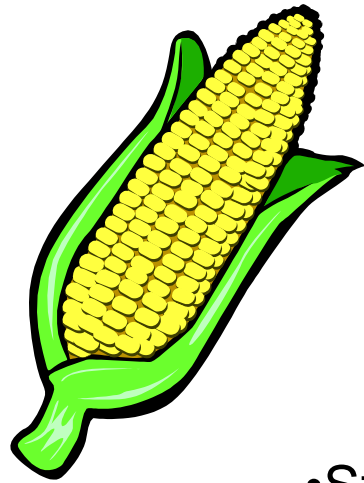


Activities for May



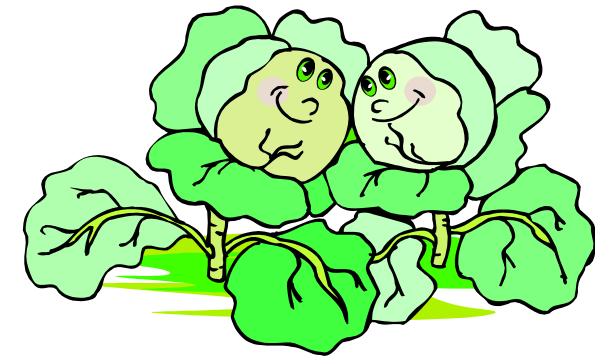
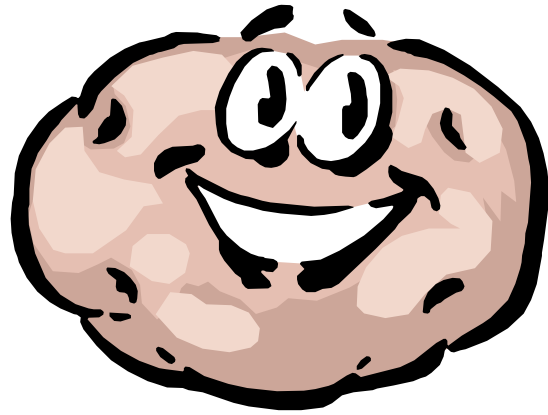
This is a busy month in the garden:

- From mid May onwards you can **plant out** tender vegetables (those that would die if caught by a frost). These include tomatoes, cucumbers, beans and pumpkins.
- Think about growing **spring onions**. They are easy to grow in a small space, a container is fine and they will be ready around 2-3 months after sowing.
- Carry on sowing most seeds including **carrots, beetroot, radish, lettuce and beans**.
- Many **herbs** can be sown now or planted outside. Basil and parsley are easy to grow on a sunny windowsill from seed. Chives, oregano and sage can also be grown from seeds and then planted outside.
- **Watering**. If the weather hots up make sure plants in pots are kept well watered. Using water from a water butt will help save you money as well as helping the planet.
- Keep on **weeding** - little & often is the best way to keep on top of weeds.



Activities for June

- Start **harvesting** early salad crops such as lettuce, radishes and spring onions.
- **Earth up potatoes** – draw soil around the leaves so only the tops are showing. In pots add more compost if space allows.
- **Keep strawberries healthy** - place straw or mats underneath fruits to keep them off the soil. Protect from birds with netting.
- **Plant winter brassicas** (cabbage/broccoli/kale). Remove any caterpillars and eggs you find on them.
- Many crops can still be started off by **sowing directly** into the ground. Try beans, courgettes, carrots, beetroot, lettuce, radish and spring onions.
- **Plant out sweetcorn** when they are around 7cm (3”) tall. Plant in a group rather than a row so they can pollinate each other.
- **Watering.** Keep soft fruit well watered to ensure a good crop. Covering the soil with mulch (a layer of gravel/grass clippings/etc) will help cut down watering and help keep down weeds.



Activities for July

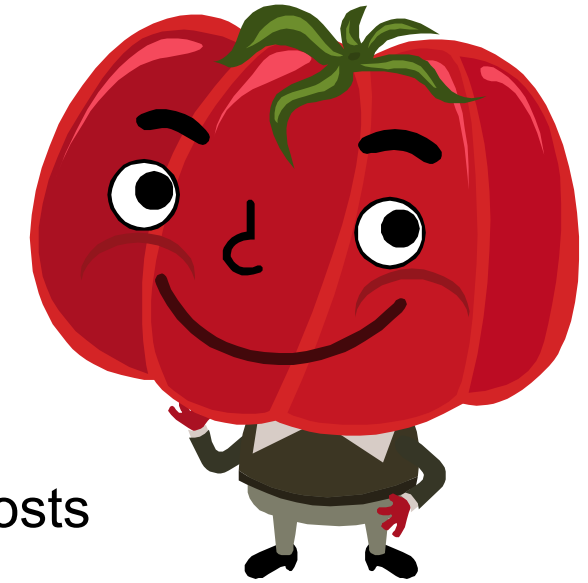
- **Feed fruiting plants.** Feed tomatoes/cucumbers/pepper etc once a week with a feed high in potash – seaweed feed or one specially for tomatoes. Dilute the feed in water and water around the base of the plant.
- **Harvest early potatoes.** Check if they are ready by lifting one plant – in a container feel around the top with your hands. If the potatoes are tiny leave a few more weeks.
- **Stop climbing beans.** When beans reach the top of their canes, pinch out the leading shoot. This will encourage more side shoots and more beans!
- **Salad.** Another sowing of lettuce, spinach and rocket seeds now will provide leaves in early autumn.
- **Put nets** over ripening fruits such as blackcurrants to protect them from birds.
- **Sow spring cabbages** to plant out in late summer.
- It's your **last chance** to sow beetroot, courgettes and french beans for an autumn harvest.



Activities for August

Harvesting really gets underway this month.

- With **cucumbers/courgettes/beans**, the more you pick the more they will grow
- **Start harvesting maincrop potatoes**. Check if they are ready by lifting one plant – in a container feel around the top with your hands. If the potatoes are tiny leave a few more weeks.
- **Sow spinach, rocket and lettuce** for autumn salads. They may overwinter too for a crop of young leaves in the spring.
- **Watering**. If the weather hots up make sure plants in pots are kept well watered. Using water from a water butt will help save you money as well as helping the planet. Covering the soil with mulch (a layer of gravel/compost/etc) will help keep soil moist and keep down weeds.
- **Pick and dry herbs**. The more you pick herbs the more young shoots they make. Hang sage, rosemary & thyme up in bunches to dry. Parsley, chives and coriander can be chopped up & frozen.



Activities for September

- **Keep picking beans**, they can continue producing up until the first frosts
- Finish **harvesting maincrop potatoes**. Dry for 1-2 days in the sun then store somewhere dark in paper or hessian sacks.
- There's still time to **sow rocket, spinach and winter hardy lettuces** for a late crop. Cover with horticultural fleece to help them keep growing when the weather turns cold.
- **Harvest tomatoes** – bring them indoors to ripen by the end of the month. Put them on a sunny windowsill or in a paper bag with a banana to help them turn red! If you have a glut make tomato sauce or soup and freeze – it will be a lovely reminder of summer in the cold winter months.
- This can be a good time to **plant perennial herbs** such as rosemary, sage, oregano, mint, etc. They will put down good roots before winter sets in.
- **Plant onion sets**. Special sets are available for planting now that will be ready in early summer. Plant 10-15cm apart with the top just visible above the soil.



Activities for October

- **Harvest squashes and pumpkins.** Leave to ripen as long as possible on the plant but make sure you harvest before the first frosts.
- **Plant garlic** from now until December, choose a sunny spot with well drained soil. Sow carrots alongside in spring, the garlic smell will deter carrot fly.
- **Tidy up beds**, removing all growth and putting it on the compost heap. Cut beans off above the ground, their roots store valuable nitrogen which will help feed next year's crops.
- **Put manure/compost** on beds for the worms to work in over the winter or sow a green manure.
- **Save seeds** - let the last beans etc ripen and dry, then save in envelopes for next year.
- The winter months are a good time to **get on with projects** in the garden i.e. building new raised beds or paths.